



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE's Buffalo-area office removes more than 1,300 aliens in first six months of FY 2006**

*Vast majority of individuals removed were criminals*

BUFFALO, N.Y –U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today announced that 1,368 people have been removed from New York in the first six months of fiscal 2006. More than 1,000 of the individuals removed had criminal convictions and many came into ICE custody directly from New York State prisons as part of ICE's Criminal Alien Program (CAP). Others were arrested as part of the ICE Fugitive Operations Program.

The removals are part of ICE's continued commitment to protect public safety by apprehending and removing aliens who have chosen to break the laws of the United States.

"Removing criminal aliens from the United States is a part of a comprehensive law enforcement approach to homeland security," said James J. Creahan, acting director of ICE's Office of Detention and Removal in Buffalo. "These people not only preyed on society in general, but in many cases they victimized other members of the immigrant communities in which they lived. Anyone who is here illegally should not be surprised if they are arrested, but these particular arrests and deportations are a matter of public safety, which is the foundation of our homeland security strategy."

The individuals ICE removed from the United States have serious convictions from crimes committed against residents of New York State.

- Victor Larazo-Barrales of Mexico was removed after serving 8 years in a New York State prison. Lazaro was convicted for repeatedly stabbing a victim during a 1997 gang attack by as many as 18 people. The assault was in retaliation for an earlier attack by a rival Mexican gang.
- Mauro Ruiz-Balcarel, a Guatemala citizen, was deported after serving his maximum sentence for the sexual abuse of a minor and endangering the welfare of a child.

- Qi Zhao Guo, a native and citizen of China was deported from the United States as a result of his aggravated felony conviction for manslaughter in New York State. Guo was legally admitted to the United States but was involved in a brutal 1994 shoot-out at a Chinese restaurant in New York City. Following his deportation Guo was turned over to Chinese officials.
- Another Chinese citizen, Shi-Lin Zheng, was removed from the United States after serving 10 years in a New York state prison for his part in a 1995 kidnapping and ransom scheme. One of the suspects was arrested at the ransom collection site and Zheng was arrested at a New York City hospital where he was being treated for a gunshot wound. Zheng has multiple aggravated felony convictions, which include kidnapping, attempted robbery, attempted grand larceny, criminal possession of a weapon, and unlawful imprisonment.
- Jamaican citizen Darnley Lloyed Phillips was removed to his home country based on his conviction in 1986 for robbery and murder. Phillips was a well know gang member in New York City who shot a person in Kings County.
- Salvadoran citizen Ricardo Polacios-Montano was deported for 1999 convictions involving kidnapping and attempted armed robbery. Polacios' convictions stemmed from an attempted armed robbery of a taxicab. During the crime he noticed nearby police officers and during the chase he entered a nearby home and held the family hostage at gunpoint. He later surrendered following a short standoff with police.
- Eris Copa, a native and Albania and a Canadian citizen of Canada was removed due to an Interpol warrant issued in Belgium. Copa was a fugitive wanted by Interpol for charges stemming from his involvement in the trafficking of Albanian females for prostitution purposes throughout Western Europe. He was deported to Canada and turned over to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Many of the removals were completed using the Justice Prisoner Alien Transportation System (JPATS). A total of 665 aliens were removed on JPATS flights during the first six months of this fiscal year.

Creahan pointed out that both the Criminal Alien Program and the Fugitive Operations Program are part of the Secure Border Initiative (SBI), a comprehensive multi-year plan by the Department of Homeland Security to secure America's borders and reduce illegal migration.

Under SBI, Homeland Security seeks to gain operational control of both the northern and southern borders, while re-engineering the detention and removal system to ensure that illegal aliens are removed from the country quickly and efficiently. SBI also involves strong interior enforcement efforts, including enhanced worksite enforcement investigations and intensified efforts to track down and remove illegal aliens inside this country.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*